

Some Promising Examples of Efforts to Build Instructional Leadership for Rigorous Instruction

Defining Instructional Leadership

Create a competency model for instructional leadership

The **Louisiana** Department of Education developed its Compass Leader Rubric to outline the core leader competencies that drive student success. The rubric closely follows the similar rubric for teachers in Louisiana, based on Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching. Specifically, the rubric outlines three domains it deems crucial for effective school leadership. First, leaders must set ambitious, data-driven goals and a vision for achievement for their school in a way that engages and invites input from all stakeholders. Second, leaders must foster a culture of professionalism among teachers that encourages collaboration and provides opportunities for professional growth. This includes creating a pipeline for teacher leaders and expanded responsibilities. Third, leaders must regularly observe teachers and provide actionable evaluations and feedback. Leaders should encourage teachers to select curricular materials and assessments in a way that aligns with the Common Core. Louisiana is currently conducting professional development efforts to spread knowledge of the new rubric and ensure principals are prepared. The State plans to fully implement the rubric statewide for School Year (SY) 2012–2013.

Integrate model in all leadership development practices and policies

Delaware officials worked to integrate State standards into all aspects of the leadership support system, including accreditation of preparation programs, licensing and certification of administrators, professional development requirements and administrator evaluations. The State worked with districts and universities to coordinate reform efforts. These efforts have shown to improve the focus of the various support systems for school principals by providing a coherent approach to school leadership.

Sources:

- Louisiana Department of Education, "Compass," accessed August 28, 2012. <http://www.louisianaschools.net/compass/>.
- Sun, Chris, "School Leadership: Improving State Systems for Leader Development," National Association of State Boards of Education, August 2011. http://nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/DG_School_Leadership_August_2011.pdf.

Preparing and Licensing Instructional Leaders

Ensure alignment and relevance of preparation programs

Illinois began a full review of all principal preparation programs. Approved programs must focus on instructional leadership and develop partnerships with school districts. The State also has begun developing a performance-based assessment for principal candidates, including two five-hour sessions to ensure principals meet the new standards.

Ensure effectiveness of preparation programs

Program accreditation is a tool State boards of education can use to improve the quality of principal training programs. Noting the amount of variability in quality of principals coming from preparation programs, **Mississippi** required all school administration programs to reapply for accreditation in the early 1990s while simultaneously raising accreditation standards for the programs. Further, all programs needed to become nationally accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and demonstrate how the program aligned with State administrator standards. Initially, no principal training program passed accreditation. Many programs had to significantly reform their entire principal training approach and pedagogy to become accredited. Research indicates these reform efforts have improved the school leadership system in the State. Compared to the nation, Mississippi principals report being better prepared for the challenges they face in schools as a result of the preparation program they attended in the State.

Remove barriers to entry

Maryland regulation allows school districts and partnerships with districts and other organizations to design and operate alternative route programs. As part of their Race to the Top efforts, Maryland will continue a partnership with New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) to work with five counties on the Eastern Shore, which are poorer and have leadership succession issues. NLNS has been working with these five counties and a university on their data analysis and problem solving to build a better pipeline for those school systems. Additionally, the State intends to create an “Officers to Principals” preparation program to train 15 exceptional leaders from the military to be principals.

One of the most innovative leader preparation programs is the NYC Leadership Academy’s Aspiring Principals Program (APP) in **New York City**. The 14-month training program uses a rigorous application process to identify diverse and talented educators who will agree to teach in high-need schools in New York City for a minimum of five years. According to the Academy, APP principals represent 17 percent of New York City principals and serve more than 112,000 students. The program works in three phases. First, participants undergo a six-week summer intensive during which teams of participants work on a series of comprehensive, simulated school projects. Second, participants complete a 10-month residency under an experienced principal while simultaneously attending twice-weekly leadership development sessions. Finally, participants attend a planning summer, which allows them to prepare for their transition into school leadership. Research on the program shows that APP principals are both more likely to teach in hard-to-staff schools and that they have a more positive impact on student mathematics achievement scores. This impact is

particularly significant in elementary and middle schools. Notably, these achievement gains persist for at least three to four years after the APP principals start.

Align licensure standards to competencies

Policymakers in **Tennessee** found their licensure system inadequately prepared principals for the challenges they face in schools and did not require principals to demonstrate competency in any of the State leadership standards after completion of a preparation program. In response, in 2008 the Tennessee State Board of Education remade its leadership system into a cohesive, performance-based, tiered licensure system through its Learning Centered Leadership Policy. On the preparation side, in order to complete the school administration preparation program and achieve the initial Instructional Leader license, individuals must now accomplish the following during the program:

- Demonstrate competency in the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards, which are based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, through a portfolio of work.
- Develop a professional development plan.
- Complete a project that demonstrates an individual's ability to improve student learning and present the results to an evaluation panel.
- Pass the School Leaders Licensure Assessment, an ETS exam based on ISLLC standards.

To advance to the next tier of license, an individual must be recommended by the director of the Tennessee Academy for School Leaders, the state's professional development program. Given that the Leadership licenses are for five years, principals must participate in multiple cycles of professional development and continuously show progress on skills linked to student achievement and school improvement in order to be eligible for advancement. Tennessee is proposing to compress the window to two years and link the required development hours to the competencies in the principal rubric and tie re-licensure more closely to the principal and teacher evaluation results.

Sources:

- Sun, Chris, "School Leadership: Improving State Systems for Leader Development," National Association of State Boards of Education, August 2011. http://nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/DG_School_Leadership_August_2011.pdf.
- Corcoran, Sean and Schwartz, Amy Ellen, "The New York City Aspiring Principals Program," Institute for Education and Social Policy, 2009, accessed August 28, 2012. <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/003/852/APP.pdf>.
- New York City Leadership Academy, "Aspiring Principals Program." accessed August 28, 2012. <http://www.nycleadershipacademy.org/aspiring/aspiring>.

Managing the Performance of Instructional Leaders

Create performance management systems and structures

Louisiana has created the Human Capital Information System, which allows State, district and school leaders to track student, teacher and principal data online, and creates a conversation between educators and evaluators. The system also aggregates data at the district level to better inform State decisions at multiple levels of leadership.

Kentucky built the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS), which is described as a “one-stop shop” technology support system for Kentucky educators that helps customize learning experiences for students, professional growth for educators and coordinated district/school-level planning and monitoring for student success. The Educator Development Suite, the component of the CIITS system specifically dedicated to teacher and leader effectiveness, will organize the teacher and leader effectiveness component to capture and analyze data for educator ratings and produce reports and dashboards. Data systems and use has been a key driver in Kentucky reforms. Working closely with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute, Kentucky has developed new ways of collecting and analyzing metrics.

Provide effective, aligned Professional Development

Ohio requires all principals with the provisional two-year license to participate in the mentoring program as a requirement for the full professional five-year license. New principals develop a portfolio that shows their competency in each of the six ISLLC standards. Mentors work with new principals over a two-year period and receive compensation for each individual with whom they work. Goals of the program include developing collaboration with peers and providing structured problem solving for new principals.

New York will use principal evaluation data to identify principals rated as “developing” or “ineffective” and create detailed improvement plans with specific goals for professional development and improvement. The State has also begun to build a professional development video library on EngageNY.org that will provide guidance and examples for each level of the leader and teacher evaluation rubric.

In late 2011, **Massachusetts** designed a rigorous training program that will prepare experienced and aspiring principals to lead the highest need schools in Massachusetts. The program for experienced principals begins with an intensive summer experience. The principals then return to their schools or take on a new school assignment. During the next school year, they have release time for additional training and benefit from regular support from a highly skilled, experienced coach. Massachusetts also provides statewide training for principals and other administrators to help them become more effective instructional leaders. In partnership with the National Institute for School Leaders, Massachusetts started a dozen 24-month administrator professional development cohorts in 2011, with a special emphasis on administrators who work at schools identified as Level 3 low-performing schools.

Evaluate in Meaningful Ways

Hillsborough County, Florida, implemented a new principal evaluation process during SY 2010–2011. Under the previous evaluation system, principal assessments were solely based on evaluation from area directors. By contrast, 30 percent of the new evaluation measure is derived from gains in school student achievement and 10 percent from the gains in achievement by high-needs subgroups. The remaining 60 percent is based on measures of how well the school leader is supporting teachers as professionals—30 percent on input from teachers and the area director in a 360-degree principal effectiveness survey, and 30 percent on factors such as retention of effective teachers and evaluation of teachers (as well as on factors related to effective building management and culture). Currently, an evaluation committee is working to refine the evaluation based on principal feedback, including improving the measures of teacher retention and teacher evaluation. During SY 2012–2013, Hillsborough will roll out bonuses for teachers and leaders for raising achievement among high-needs students and, beginning the following school year, will introduce a new career ladder and performance-based compensation system (based on completion of three evaluation cycles). Hillsborough, which received a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Intensive Partnership grant, also is using funds to strengthen school leadership by supplying principals with better data and training to guide management, instruction and professional development and to create principal-residency programs in high-need schools.

Create career pathways

In May 2012, the **Delaware** Department of Education (DDOE) rolled out a three-year pilot talent attraction and retention initiative designed to bring and keep high-performing school leaders, as well as teachers, to the State's most challenged schools. The pilot includes a small subset of schools to participate, chosen based on indicators connected with high-need learners (such as high percentages of free- and reduced-price lunch students or English learners). Top-performing highly-effective principals, assistant principals and teachers in the participating schools are eligible for a financial incentive of \$10,000 if they earn "exceeds" ratings on Component V of the Delaware Performance Appraisal System and are rated "highly effective" overall.

In the second half of 2012, the DDOE planned to work with the schools to identify, verify and award retention incentives to these educators who commit to staying in their schools for at least two additional school years. At the end of its first year, the DDOE will evaluate the program's overall impact and the extent to which the incentive was a factor in the decision of educators who received them to stay at a low-performing school or to leave a previous school and teach or lead in a high-needs school.

The **School Administration Manager (SAM) model** is a professional development process designed to change a principal's focus from school management tasks to instructional leadership activities. The model allows principals to increase their focus on instructional leadership by identifying staff members—or teams of staff members—who meet with the principal to schedule instructional work ahead of time and develop a structure within the school to respond to management issues without interrupting the school leader from core instructional tasks. Management-dedicated staff, or “SAMs,” most frequently consists of secretaries, but the role can also be filled by assistant principals, teacher leaders or leadership teams.

In two external evaluations of the SAM model, researchers found that, according to the model's time-tracking systems, participating principals gained the equivalent of 27 extra days of instructional leadership time in their first year and more than 55 days by their third year of participation. The rate of gain in student achievement at their schools also significantly outpaced control schools. The model is operated by the National SAM Innovation Project and is now used in 76 school districts in 15 States. One is North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Beth Thompson, principal of Whitewater Elementary School there, says the SAM model forces a principal to analyze time spent on instructional leadership versus management, which helps faculty understand what a principal ought to be doing. She notes that she has greater opportunity for instructional leadership tasks such as celebrating the effective educators in her building and meeting with small groups of students as a result of her school's adoption of the SAM model.

Sources:

- Sun, Chris, “School Leadership: Improving State Systems for Leader Development,” National Association of State Boards of Education, August 2011. http://nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/DG_School_Leadership_August_2011.pdf.
- Delaware Department of Education, “Delaware Talent Retention and Attraction Initiative: Guidelines Manual,” June 2012. http://blogs.delawareonline.com/delawareed/files/2012/06/DE-Talent-Retention-Program-Guidelines-Manual-Year-1_June-1.pdf.
- Content repurposed from the Reform Support Network publication “The Principal Pipeline: Highlights of Race to the Top State Efforts to Develop Effective Leaders for Turnaround Schools,” June 2012. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/principal-pipeline.pdf>.
- Hillsborough County Public Schools, “Empowering Effective Teachers” Presentation, February 2011. www.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/lmc/hillsborough-denver-lmc.ppt.
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, “Intensive Partnership Factsheet: Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS).” <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/united-states/Pages/hillsborough-county-public-schools-fact-sheet.aspx>.

- Mendels, Pamela, "Principals in the Pipeline: Districts Construct a Framework to Develop School Leadership," *JSD, Learning Forward*, June 2012 (33.3). <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/district-policy-and-practice/Pages/Principals-in-the-Pipeline.aspx>.
- National SAM Innovation Project, "SAM Process Introduction," July 2012. <http://www.samsconnect.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/SAMS-Process-Introduction.pdf>.
- Turnbull, Brenda, Arcaira, Erikson and Sinclair, Beth, "Implementation of the National SAM Innovation Project: A Comparison of Project Designs," Policy Studies Associates, Inc., August 2011. <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/effective-principal-leadership/Documents/Implementation-of-the%20National-SAM-Innovation-Project-A-Comparison-of-Project-Designs.pdf>.
- Interview, Principal Beth Thompson, Published on July 16, 2012. http://www.samsconnect.com/?page_id=35.

This publication features information from public and private organizations and links to additional information created by those organizations. Inclusion of this information does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any products or services offered or views expressed, nor does the Department of Education control its accuracy, relevance, timeliness or completeness.